

The 2010 census count begins this month when the Census Bureau mails census forms to every resident in the United States and its territories. By taking a snapshot of America, the Decennial Census will determine many important issues in our communities including apportionment of congressional seats and the allotment of Federal and State aid for vital services in our schools, senior centers and critical infrastructure projects. By April 1<sup>st</sup>, Census Day, residents should complete their forms and send them back in the mail, simple steps to help prevent an undercount.

Plagued by undercounts in 1990 and 2000, the Census Bureau is taking unprecedented action to create awareness about the importance of completing and returning census forms. The reality of undercounts is that they cost the very communities who need assistance the most millions of dollars in Federal and State aid. As communities begin to recover from the economic downturn, we simply cannot accept another undercount and deny residents vital resources their communities need going forward.

As Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, one of the committees charged with oversight of the census, I am committed to ensuring an accurate and fair count. To help raise awareness about the 2010 Census and to examine efforts by the Census Bureau to prevent undercounts, I joined a committee field hearing in my home district, New York's 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in Brooklyn, N.Y., to get a local perspective on this problem. My district also happens to be one of the most undercounted districts in the country, a trend I want to reverse beginning this year.

During the hearing we focused on Group Quarter Populations, one of the communities most consistently undercounted. Group Quarter Populations consist of people residing in the United States who do not live in single family homes or apartments; instead they live in group situations such as college dormitories, nursing homes, military barracks or prisons.

In his testimony before the subcommittee, Census Director Dr. Robert Groves identified the ideas and practices the Census Bureau has taken to count people in Group Quarter Populations nationwide to generate an accurate Census count. We also heard from Robert Goldenkoff, Director for Strategic Issues at the Government Accountability Office (GAO), who explained that the Census Bureau has implemented a "three pronged approach" to counting group quarter populations. This approach includes verifying that a location is in fact a group quarter dwelling, classifying the specific type of group quarter population and visiting the location to verify the actual count of the group quarter facility.

I was pleased to hear about this effort particularly because Brooklyn has a large Group Quarter Population which consists of a large minority population and high poverty rate. Furthermore, in the past these areas have been particularly affected by past undercounts due to a low response rate. As a result, Brooklyn has been shortchanged on the amount of Federal and State aid it deserves, and another undercount would leave thousands of people without resources they and their community desperately need.

While several challenges to a successful census count remain, I am confident the Census Bureau understands these issues and has made tangible progress toward accurately counting all populations, including Group Quarter populations. I am hopeful the Census Bureau's efforts to encourage residents to complete and mail back their census forms will be successful and help reverse the trend of undercounts in my home district and across the country.